



**REMARKS OF KEITH E. GOTTFRIED  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

**PRESENTED AT THE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS SYMPOSIUM  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2005, 9:45 A.M., LOCAL TIME  
THE WHARTON SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
JON HUNTSMAN HALL – EIGHTH FLOOR  
3730 WALNUT STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA  
[as prepared for delivery]**

Good morning and welcome.

Thank you Bob Rosenberg for that generous introduction. And thank you to Community Solutions and the Institute for Urban Research at the University of Pennsylvania for organizing and hosting today's symposium.

I am very pleased to be here today with all of you. I am pleased to be back at my alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania. I have many fond memories of this campus and relish any opportunity to come back to Penn. I am also glad to be back in Philadelphia, a city I called home for close to ten years. I have been saving up calories all week so that I can indulge in at least one cheese-steak at Pat's.

Joining me here today from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are Steven Nesmith, Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Guy Ciarrocchi, Regional Director for Region III (which includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia), George Weidenfeller, HUD Deputy General Counsel, and Althea Forrester, Assistant General Counsel for Assisted Housing.

I am pleased that we are also joined today by some former HUD officials, Monica Sussman and Professor Susan Wachter. Monica Sussman is a former HUD Deputy General Counsel. Professor

Susan Wachter is a former HUD Assistant Secretary. Welcome to both of you and thank you for being here today. Once a member of the HUD family, always a member.

Secretary Jackson sends his regrets that he cannot make it today. As many of you know, we are extremely fortunate to have Secretary Jackson at HUD's helm, as he is the first HUD Secretary to ever direct a housing authority. Secretary Jackson knows public housing. He managed the Housing Authorities in St. Louis, Washington, DC and Dallas and brings a unique perspective to HUD. When it comes to public housing he understands the complexities and the flexibility that is required. But most importantly, the Secretary, along with everyone else at HUD, realizes that the residents whom Public Housing serves are our greatest concern.

Before I departed Washington, DC earlier this week to come to Philadelphia, Secretary Jackson instructed me to tell you that this is my "maiden speech," so to speak, as HUD's General Counsel. As many of you know, I am very new to HUD, having only been confirmed by the U.S. Senate earlier this month. This is my second full week on the job and my first official trip out of Washington.

Over the past two decades, I have been in the accounting business, the legal business and, most recently, the computer software business. Today, when folks ask me what I do for a living I tell them I am in the hope business because that is the "business" of HUD. Whether in the context of providing access to affordable housing, meeting President Bush's goal of at least 5.5 million new minority homeowners before the end of the decade, ending chronic homelessness, vigorously enforcing fair housing, civil rights and anti-discrimination laws, and, of course, providing housing and other desperately needed relief to the victims of hurricanes Katrina, Rita and, most recently, Wilma, working with many of the public housing authorities represented here today, we strive to provide hope to millions of families across our great nation.

I am pleased to see a number of our country's leading housing professionals here with us today. I look forward to having a chance to meet each of you and I look forward to working with each of you over the next few years. In particular, I appreciate Carl Greene, the

Executive Director of the Philadelphia Housing Authority, for being here. I had the privilege of spending some quality time with Carl this morning and yesterday got to tour some of Philadelphia's public housing properties. I can't begin to tell you how impressed I was with the properties I visited. Among the properties I visited was the new Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza. Where once stood high density housing that were sources of decay, crime and social problems, now stands a mixed-income neighborhood of very attractive two and three story townhouses, duplexes and two small apartment buildings. The housing units aesthetically blend into the existing neighborhood and nothing about their appearance suggests that it is public housing. Under Carl's leadership, the Philadelphia Housing Authority has redefined public housing and made the Philadelphia Housing Authority a positive force for change in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. Where not many years ago, proximity to public housing served as a disincentive for others to live in the neighborhood, quite the contrary is the case today in Philadelphia. Having toured a number of their newer and redeveloped properties yesterday, I can tell you that housing redeveloped by the Philadelphia Housing Authority housing, in many cases, is the most attractive property in a neighborhood, creating an environment in which families can feel comfortable living nearby. Based on what I saw yesterday, the Philadelphia Housing Authority has clearly become a positive force for change in Philadelphia.

The theme of today's symposium is "strategies and practices for repositioning public housing." As I witnessed yesterday during my tour of some of Philadelphia's public housing, public housing does not need to be a world apart. As Carl Greene and his colleagues at the Philadelphia Housing Authority have demonstrated, there are proven strategies for breaking the walls down between public housing and the rest of the community. I believe, and know most of you would agree, that rather than a world apart, public housing must become a place of promise, a place to nurture and grow the seeds of citizenship, a place to build opportunity for a better life and commitment to a better country.

At HUD, we believe that every American should have the chance to share in our country's prosperity and opportunities. When we provide access to affordable housing, housing assistance, job training and

other support services to our fellow citizens who need it the most, we provide a foundation upon which they can build better lives for themselves and their families.

I think we all share many of the same goals for public housing. However, there are different paths to those goals and, today, I hope we can all gain some insight into the different strategies, techniques and innovations on how to realize those goals.

I am very excited about today's agenda and look forward to hearing all the presentations and panel discussions. Over the course of the day, I hope to get a chance to meet each of you personally.

Thanks again to Bob Rosenberg and Professor Wachter for organizing and hosting this symposium and thanks again to all of you for taking some time from your busy schedules to be here today to discuss and share innovative strategies for repositioning and improving public housing within our country.